



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
P.O. Box 45010, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

March 12, 2015

Dear Colleagues and Fellow Washingtonians:

As we closed out 2014, the state of Washington's human services support system shows both great accomplishments and great challenges. Under the leadership of Governor Jay Inslee we have begun to repair breaks in our safety net. Governor Inslee has shown he will not turn a blind eye to the vulnerable and has provided the moral leadership that, more than anything else, is required to move us forward.

At the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) we bring a mission-focused approach to our work. We see our mission as transforming lives. Every client comes to us in need of some type of help and we use every tool available to help them transform their lives.

Each of DSHS' six direct-service administrations has experienced some great successes in the past year. The right margin of this letterhead illustrates just some of those accomplishments. To further highlight just a few:

- **Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA)** received American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) accolades as the second-best state long-term supports provider in the nation, and did so at the 34th lowest level of funding. By our math that makes them the best aging and long-term support program in the Country. Last year alone AL TSA saved taxpayers \$350 million by comparison to per capita state spending in 1999.
- **Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration (BHSIA)** successfully ended the practice of psychiatric boarding, a practice that had been with us for years whereby psychiatric patients in extreme need were confined and boarded in hospital emergency rooms without receiving appropriate mental health treatment as they waited days or weeks for treatment. Moreover, BHSIA accomplished this achievement at a savings of \$17 million under budget. BHSIA also crafted and commenced a program to serve children with severe mental illness who are at high risk of institutionalization – this settled years of long-running litigation and properly moved the focus from the courts to the kids.
- **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** gained the United Cerebral Palsy League's number one ranking for having the strongest supported employment in the country for clients with developmental disabilities. DDA also created a "specialized services" program to ensure that their clients in nursing facilities were getting the proper array of services.



AARP ranks Washington state **second** in the nation for services to older adults, people with disabilities and family caregivers



United Cerebral Palsy ranks Washington state **first** in the nation for its support for employment of disabled persons



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA: Washington's Economic Services Administration has "exemplary" EBT card accuracy rate of nearly 100 percent.



WHATCOM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

"Children's Administration CPS workers' lives are dedicated to children. They are not the enemy. They are the **heroes**."

Whatcom County Superior Court Commissioner Thomas Verge, speaking during a recent hearing.



National Commission on Correctional Health Care

Washington's Echo Glen Center's Dialectical Behavior Therapy awarded **Program of the Year** in juvenile rehabilitation.



Performance-based Standards

Washington state is **first** in the nation to use an interactive database to **identify racial and ethnic disparities** in juvenile corrections and treatment.



Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Washington named **Outstanding State Member** for its commitment to community anti-drug coalitions.

- **Economic Services Administration (ESA)** again received recognition from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a national leader in food assistance accuracy while partnering with the DSHS Office of Fraud and Accountability to stop more than \$12.9 million in inappropriate benefit payments.
- **Children's Administration (CA)** completed the first roll-out of the Family Assessment Response, a differential response program designed to move child neglect cases out of the old-school investigatory framework and into a family support model designed to reduce the number of children entering foster care. Already these efforts are showing strong results.
- **Juvenile Justice & Rehabilitation Administration (JJ&RA)** implemented a pilot program to link youth with employment in the manufacturing sector – and did it with funds from a federal grant.

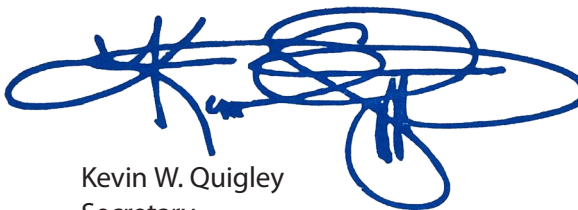
Acknowledging our successes does not tell the whole story. It is important to look at our social services system with eyes that can admit, as Governor Inslee candidly did in his 2015 State of the State Address, that many of our social programs have been "hollowed out" by years of budget reductions. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of mental health services where deep problems existed in children's mental health, community mental health, and state psychiatric hospitals. In each of these areas the State has been plagued by lawsuits charging, most often correctly, that Washington State was failing in its duties to these citizens. Thankfully great progress or outright success has brought, or is bringing, positive change. Best of all, this progress has come on a fully bipartisan basis. We are extremely grateful for the strong support we have received from the Legislature.

Quality Assurance at our Developmental Disabilities facilities, or Residential Habilitation Centers, have fared as poorly as our mental hospitals by a "hollowed out" condition, despite the tireless work of dedicated staff. Until recently, federal regulations for the care of people with developmental disabilities in nursing homes were not satisfactorily followed. Although we share the blame with the Federal government for allowing this to occur, we were not blameless. Moreover, significant additional work lies ahead to build a quality assurance system for these facilities that will move them to a place of leadership.

The attached *2015 Report on the State of Human Services in Washington* details the condition of many of our State's social services programs and the progress on our many DSHS strategic goals related to these programs. By comparing our starting point in 2012 with our progress through 2014 I think you will find that it provides a clear overview of our many areas of progress, as well as our many areas of ongoing concern.

To my teammates I offer my thanks to you for your unbreakable commitment to transforming lives. And to the many clients, families of clients, and stakeholders I thank you for joining us in our mission.

Sincerely,



Kevin W. Quigley  
Secretary

*DSHS: Transforming Lives*



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA recognizes Washington state for using innovative strategies to monitor and investigate fraud on social media and e-commerce websites.



Washington State Auditor

State Auditor's Office:  
Washington's child support program so well-run and cost-effective no audit is needed.



SSA recognized Washington's Division of Disability Determination Services with a Commissioner's Award for outstanding performance in helping individuals with disabilities applying for federal benefits



Washington State Auditor

Washington's Annual Financial Report recognizes Lean efforts to vastly streamline Human Resources paperwork and processes.



WHATCOM COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Judge cites remarkable improvements to foster care in Washington; says children in system are "well-served".



U.S. Green Building Council awards LEED Silver Certification for new buildings at Echo Glen Children's Center and Green Hill School.